CLAIMS:

1.   A method of providing an interactive communication channel over the internet between a provider of direct broadcast services (DBS) and DBS subscribers, comprising:

      connecting a DBS subscriber station to a first Internet interface having a first Internet protocol (IP) address;

      connecting a DBS server to a second Internet interface having a second Internet protocol address;

      providing a communication path between said first Internet interface and a first Internet service provider (ISP) and between said DBS server and a second ISP; and

      establishing a communication link between said DBS server and said DBS subscriber station via said first and second ISP over the Internet network to enable the interactive exchange and retrieval of information between said DBS provider and said DBS subscriber station.

2.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said communication path is established between said DBS subscriber station and DBS provider by requesting said second Internet interface to dial the IP address of said first Internet interface.

3.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said communication path provides a full-time connection between said first Internet interface and said first ISP.

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4.   A method as defined in claim 3, wherein a full-time connection is provided between said first Internet interface and said first ISP using an asymmetrical or symmetrical digital subscriber line.

5.   A method as defined in claim 3, wherein a full-time connection is provided between said first Internet interface and said first ISP using a cable modem.

6.   A method as defined in claim 2, further comprising the step of querying said first Internet interface to retrieve from said DBS subscriber station, audience rating measurements indicative of the DBS subscriber's watching habits.

7.   A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising the step of continuously monitoring said DBS subscriber station to measure said DBS subscriber's watching habits.

8.   A method as defined in claim 3, further comprising the step of transmitting a public encryption key from said DBS server to said DBS subscriber station to update a DBS signal decoding algorithm stored at said DBS subscriber station.

9.   A method as defined in claim 8, wherein said public encryption key makes use of Kerberos encryption algorithm.

10. A system for providing an interactive communication channel over the Internet between a provider of direct broadcast services (DBS) and DBS subscribers, comprising:

a DBS subscriber station for receiving and decoding DBS signals;

first Internet interface means for connecting said DBS subscriber station to an Internet network, said first Internet interface means having a first Internet protocol (IP) address;

second Internet interface means for connecting a DBS provider's server to said Internet network, said second Internet interface means having a second Internet protocol (IP) address; and

communication link means between said first Internet interface means and said Internet network, to enable the interactive exchange and retrieval of information between said DBS server and said DBS subscriber station via said Internet network.

11. A system as defined in claim 10, wherein a communication path between said first and second interface means is established when said DBS server dials said first IP address.

12. A system as defined in claim 10, wherein said communication link means provides a full-time connection between said DBS subscriber station and said Internet network.

13.   A system as defined in claim 12, wherein said communication link means comprises an asymmetrical or symmetrical digital subscriber line.

14.   A system as defined in claim 12, wherein said communication link means comprises a cable modem.

15.   A system as defined in claim 11, wherein said DBS subscriber station is provided with means for measuring and storing information on said DBS subscriber's watching habits.

16.   A system as defined in claim 15, wherein said DBS provider's server continuously monitors said means for measuring and storing via said communication link means.

17.   A system as defined in claim 15, wherein said DBS provider's server can retrieve information on said subscriber's watching habits by querying said means for measuring and storing.

18.   A system as defined in claim 17, wherein said means for measuring and storing is queried via said communication link means in response to a query command sent to said first Internet interface means.

19.   A system as defined in claim 12, wherein said DBS subscriber station is further comprised of means for storing a DBS signal decoding algorithm.

20.   A system as defined in claim 19, wherein said DBS signal decoding algorithm makes use of a public key which is continuously updated via said communication link means by said DBS server.

21.   A system as defined in claim 20, wherein said DBS decoding algorithm makes use of a Kerberos encryption algorithm.

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